

May 19, 2003

Docket Management
Room PL-401
400 Seventh Street, S W
Washington, DC 20590

Regarding—U.S. DOT Docket: NHTSA-2003-14375

To whom it may concern;

In response to the request for public comment regarding Docket NHTSA-2003-14375, I would like to offer the following as a personal outlook on the proposed function.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is proposing to interview motorcyclists, in attempt to classify their characteristics, attitudes, behaviors, and experience levels of motorcyclists—of those involved in a motorcycle crash, and those not involved in a motorcycle crash. This, in and of itself, would seem an exercise in futility. The matrix created by the collection of data in its proposed state, would easily demonstrate the vast cultural diversity of motorcyclists nationwide. This goes without mention of geographical impact on this study. Thus, the proposal of attempting to find similarities in age, experience, and personal behavior—as this information pertains to motorcycle crashes—produces no logical justification, and would be hard-pressed to formulate a viable solution to reduce crashed and injuries.

From information gathered, NHTSA hopes to extrapolate data to better direct them in their efforts to construct legislation to reduce motorcycle crashes and injury. However, the study fails to incorporate the influence of other vehicles (and the operators) associated with motorcycle crashes, when applicable. If the study is to be with any balance and validity, the interviewing process needs to include operators of other vehicles involved. Otherwise, it is assumed that the characteristics and behaviors of each individual motorcycle rider are solely responsible for any motorcycle crash or injury. Adding in these additional vehicle operators adds to the complex matrix of diversity.

Better suited in the attempt to reduce risk of injury or crash, is simply to provide resources to support quality motorcycle rider educational programs—offering different levels, from beginner to the experienced rider. An informed and trained rider, regardless of personal characteristic or experience classification, is less likely to be found victim of a motorcycle crash. Knowing basic operation of a motor vehicle of any sort, is insufficient. Educating the finer points of necessary skills to safely negotiate a motorcycle in various environmental conditions, is an essential portion of promoting a decrease in injuries and motorcycle crashes.

In conclusion, it is my belief that the proposed interview process and study possesses inherent flaws, which would be an imprudent placement of resources that would be better placed in educational programs.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Weidner
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